

## [J. T. Smith]

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FOLKWAY S

Edward Townsend

McLennan County

District # 8 [???

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A. Personal interview with J. T. Smith, at one time a cowboy on the Caufield Ranch.

The Caufield Ranch was one of the first ranches that was fenced west of Waco. At that time, dancing was the most common amusement, and before and after each big cow hunt it was the custom for some family to give a dance to speed the parting cowboys or to welcome their return. The music was furnished by a single fiddle or accordion, but sometimes two or three other stringed or wind instruments were added. Most of the dancers danced only old Virginia reels or cotillions, but some of each sex were expert "jigger" and some could dance the "round dances" such as the polka, waltz schottish, etc.

At the time of this story, the dance was given at the foreman's house. It was the usual type of building, wooden frame with two large rooms and a wide hall between; long porches stretched across the front and beside the L-shaped rear room. Huge fireplaces of rough stones were at each end of these front rooms.

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At one of the dances, according to prevailing custom, a large wash pot of coffee, surrounded by numerous tin cups, was kept boiling all night under a large tree in front yard, so that the guests might refresh themselves whenever they wished. While the cowboys and their sweethearts danced light-heartedly inside the house, some tree lizards also engaged in dancing in the live oak tree just above the pot of coffee.

About three o'clock that morning, a lady asked Smith to get her a cup of coffee. He gallantly sprang to do her bidding, but, to his surprise, the pot was almost empty. He scraped the bottom of the pot, however, and with a sweeping bow presented the steaming cup to the fair one. The porch was only dimly lighted from the lamps within the house, so the lady laughed and talked with Smith while sipping the hot liquid. When she had almost finished the cup, someone came outside and the beam of the light from the open door fell full upon the contents of the bottom of the cup. Imagine her horror and consternation upon beholding a boiled lizard in the bottom of her cup! Nature brought that coffee back to the world instantly, while Smith, in the presence of all assembled, condemned each separate member of the lizard tribe to Hades in language that was not suitable for Sunday School. (A) [???